

Claims:

1. A method for accessing a defect knowledge library of a defect source identification system comprising:

supplying information to the defect knowledge library from a plurality of subscribers, where a particular subscriber establishes a data sharing level that defines an amount of the information that is supplied that can be shared with other subscribers; and

establishing, for the particular subscriber, an access price and an access level for accessing the defect knowledge library that is based upon a data sharing level of that particular subscriber.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein at least one of the plurality of subscribers is an integrated circuit manufacturer.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the information comprises one or more of defect data, defect source data, defect mitigation information.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the access price for the particular subscriber is decreased when the particular subscriber authorizes sharing of their information with other subscribers, where the more information that is shared correspondingly reduces the access price.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein the access level controls the amount of information the particular subscriber can access of other subscribers, where the higher the access level the more information that the particular subscriber can access.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein the access level for the particular subscriber is increased when the particular subscriber authorizes sharing of their information with other subscribers, where the more information that is shared correspondingly increases the access level.

7. A computer readable medium containing a software routine that, when executed by a processor, causes a system to perform a method for accessing a defect knowledge

library of a defect source identification system, the method comprises:

supplying information to the defect knowledge library from a plurality of subscribers, where a particular subscriber establishes a data sharing level that defines an amount of the information that is supplied that can be shared with other subscribers; and

establishing, for the particular subscriber, an access price and an access level for accessing the defect knowledge library that is based upon a data sharing level of that particular subscriber.

8. The method of claim 7 wherein at least one of the plurality of subscribers is an integrated circuit manufacturer.

9. The method of claim 7 wherein the information comprises one or more of defect data, defect source data, defect mitigation information.

10. The method of claim 7 wherein the access price for the particular subscriber is decreased when the particular subscriber authorizes sharing of their information with other subscribers, where the more information that is shared correspondingly reduces the access price.

11. The method of claim 7 wherein the access level controls the amount of information the particular subscriber can access of other subscribers, where the higher the access level the more information that the particular subscriber can access.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein the access level for the particular subscriber is increased when the particular subscriber authorizes sharing of their information with other subscribers, where the more information that is shared correspondingly increases the access level.

13. Apparatus for accessing a defect knowledge library of a defect source identification system comprising:

subscriber equipment for supplying information to the defect knowledge library

from a plurality of subscribers, where a particular subscriber establishes a data sharing level that defines an amount of the information that is supplied that can be shared with other subscribers; and

a server computer within the defect knowledge library for establishing, for the particular subscriber, an access price and an access level for accessing the defect knowledge library that is based upon a data sharing level of that particular subscriber.

14. The apparatus of claim 13 wherein at least one of the plurality of subscribers is an integrated circuit manufacturer.

15. The apparatus of claim 13 wherein the information comprises one or more of defect data, defect source data, defect mitigation information.

16. The apparatus of claim 15 wherein the access price for the particular subscriber is decreased when the particular subscriber authorizes sharing of their information with other subscribers, where the more information that is shared correspondingly reduces the access price.

17. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the access level controls the amount of information the particular subscriber can access of other subscribers, where the higher the access level the more information that the particular subscriber can access.

18. The method of claim 17 wherein the access level for the particular subscriber is increased when the particular subscriber authorizes sharing of their information with other subscribers, where the more information that is shared correspondingly increases the access level.